DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 905 EC 113 657

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TITLE Resource Needs: An Analysis of a Statewide Survey of Vocational Educators in Alabama Who Work with Disadvantaged and Handicapped Students. Special Needs Coordination Unit: Report #2.
PUB DATE Jan 77
NOTE 20p.; This study was supported in part by a mini-grant from the University of Illinois; For related information, see EC 113 658-659

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Disadvantaged Youth; Exceptional Child Research; *Handicapped Children; *Needs Assessment; *Resource Materials; State Surveys; *Vocational Education Teachers
IDENTIFIERS *Alabama

ABSTRACT

The paper reports on an analysis of questionnaires completed by approximately 500 vocational educators in Alabama concerning their need for resources to work more effectively with handicapped and disadvantaged students. Responses are reported for six service areas (agribusiness education, business and office education, distributive education, health occupations education, home economic education, and trade and industrial education), and are said to indicate two primary needs: audiovisual and print materials. Recommendations are made for using state resources earmarked for special needs education, for developing a materials loan center in conjunction with the statewide resource center, and for making available an itinerant resource person. (CI)

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RESOURCE NEEDS:

An Analysis of a Statewide Survey of Vocational Educators in Alabama Who Work With Diadvantaged and Handicapped Students.

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January 1977

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This study was supported in part by a mini-grant from the University of Illinois.

Special Needs Coordination Unit: Report #2

EC113657

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This report was made possible through the cooperation of the Alabama State Director of Vocational Education and his staff, and the hundreds of Vocational Educators who responded to the survey questionnaire.

The comments, analyses, interpretations and recommendations of this study may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the supporting agencies or program.

A note to out-of-state readers: Caution should be used in generalizing the implications from this study to agencies and programs outside the state of Alabama.

SUMMARY

An analysis of the responses of Vocational Educators in Alabama with regard to their need for "resources" to more effectively work with handicapped and disadvantaged students indicated two primary areas: Audiovisual and print materials. Additional resource needs included: Where to get materials; the resource teacher or consultant; supplies for projects; specially adopted equipment, and more transportation for field trips.

Recommendations were made for using state resources earmarked for special needs education, to sponsor special projects, resource material and a statewide resource center for special needs education.

INTRODUCTION

The descriptive elements of this study were detailed in Report #1 on Training Needs. Please refer to this publication for procedural information.

A copy of the survey questionnaire used in this study is available in Appendix A.

The following sections in this publication have been referenced for reader usability.

Please note that for each of the service area analyzes with regard to resource needs, that a notation proceeds each statement (N = 1,2,3,...). This notation represents the number of responses that were reported for that particular statement.

Resource Needs:	Page
Agribusiness Education	2
Business and Office Education	3
Distributive Education	4
Health Occupations Education	5
Home Economic Education	6
Trade and Industrial Education	9
Resource Needs: A Composite of Statements from All Service Areas	10

The following statements are based on a response to the question: "What resource needs, other than financial, can you identify that would help you to work better with the special needs of students or adults?"

RESOURCES
AGRIBUSINESS EDUCATION

N=19 The most frequently reported resource need was for audiovisual materials.

In this category were such requests as:

AV material would be helpful because these students are better able to understand things that they can see.

All kinds of AV would be better than all the books in a library.

More visual aids can be used. Many can be made by the teachers.

Need for films on small operation farming.

N=12 The category of resource material specifically identified in the responses reflected the following type needs:

Simple teaching units.

Specially prepared booklets.

Hands-on work experience on scale models.

Funnybook type materials and workbooks.

High interest material developed on a low reading level.

N=6 In this category the teachers identified a lack of supplies, machines, tools, lumber, nails, metal and related fabrication and construction supplies.

N=5 This group of statements focused on the need for a variety of resource people to come into the classroom and work with the teacher.

Each of the following statements was identified only once in the teacher responses:

We need more education materials at the 7th and 8th grade levels.

We need detailed information about the student so that we can provide special efforts.

RESOURCES
BUSINESS AND OFFICE EDUCATION

N=15 The most frequently requested resource was in the area of audiovisuals. Labs, audio tapes, library materials, films, simulated projects with AV materials and, in general, more audiovisual materials which are colorful and interesting, and films that show examples of problems faced and how to solve them were some of the typical responses in this category.

N=12 The statements in this category focused on curriculum and individualized programmed materials that students can use at their own pace.

N=3 This group of resource need statements identified resource people, either teacher aids or consultants to the teacher, to help develop materials and serve as a guide for methods and techniques.

N=3 The focus of the statements in this category was on the need for equipment. Included here were electric typewriters especially for use by the handicapped, left-handed typing desks, and audio recorders with special speed regulators.

Each of the following statements was reported only once:

Need for a listing of resource material.

Need more bus transportation for field trips.

RESOURCES

DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION

N=8 The most frequently reported resource need was for curricula, curricular development, and curricular materials to be used with the special need population. Several of these responses focused on "curricular materials for the slow learner."

N=6 The need for more audiovisual materials was identified in this grouping as a priority resource need. One statement specified the need for "films" and not just "filmstrips."

N=4 The statements in this category reflected the need for more games and realia type materials for use in the classroom with the special needs students.

N=4 The need for appropriate reading materials, either in the form of text geared to the student's reading level or reading development material, was reported as a resource need.

N=3 Transportation was identified as a resource need. Specifically mentioned here was the availability of bus transportation for field trips.

The following resource needs were reported only once:

Need for a guideline handbook--how to work with the special needs student.

Need for resource persons to help the teacher.

RESOURCES
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS EDUCATION

N=11 The most frequently reported resource need was for individualized learning packets.

A typical response in this category was: "A packet of performance-based instruction for all students so that each one can work on a skill or whatever he must learn at his own pace."

N=15 This group of statements reflected a need for more audiovisual materials.

N=4 In this category access to a resource person was the critical concern. The emphasis was on a resource person who has made it, and can realistically face the problems met in the real world.

N=4 In this category the emphasis was on the need for resource material, ranging from large print textbooks to "We need a resource center with access to all types of materials."

RESOURCES
HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

N=41 The most frequently identified resource need centered around the concept of media and audiovisual material. Included in this category were such comments as:

Audiovisual materials geared to our students - most AV materials are geared to the average learner.

Transparencies showing the work materials so that they can be identified.

Audiovisuals for non-readers.

Audiovisuals to duplicate for our use.

Illustrated materials that show a way to accomplish something.

Need a listing of AV resources in home economics area.

Good films on social and emotional maturity.

AV materials for teaching boys in foods, clothing and consumer education.

More AV's on steps for doing various tasks.

Included in this category were requests for more audiovisual equipment.

N=33 This category of resource needs focused on curricular materials and curriculum development.

There were numerous requests for course or curriculum outlines for teaching the handicapped and disadvantaged students.

There were also several requests for individualized packets or curricular materials.

Some of the typical statements with regard to resources included:

> Need help in developing a curriculum designed for the handicapped.
>
> Aid in curriculum development and course content on a level suitable for special needs students.
>
> Need a curriculum which gives teachers ideas as to how to teach special needs students who are in the same classroom with normal students.
>
> Curriculum development for earlier age level. Feel much could be accomplished with more "hands-on" experiences at earlier age level.

N=30 In this category labeled "Resources", there was a focus on both 'materials' and personnel.

With regard to materials the needs expressed ranged from textbooks at an adult interest level, but with low reading level to a statewide resource center for the development and distribution of materials.

With regard to resource personnel, the needs ranged from student and teacher aids to resource consultants who would work with all programs.

Typical statements in this resource need category included:

> Let's have a basic resource lab of special persons in each regional area that can be called on for help.
>
> Lay people from the community to come in and give demonstrations.
>
> Materials to encourage creativity. You run out of things to do with bottles, boxes, etc. We need gardening supplies, flowers, fertilizer and flower beds on school grounds.

N=19 This category is directly related to the preceding category on resources. The focus here, however, was on where to get resource material. Typical statements in this category include:

> What is available? Where to get it, and at what price?
>
> Where can you order low level reading at an adult interest level?

N=6 This category of statements centered around a need for simplified teaching aids and ideas for classroom projects that are relatively inexpensive..

N=5 This group of statements focused on the need for additional construction materials such as cloth, and appropriate lab equipment, such as tables and chairs. Included in this category was the need for equipment that has been modified for use with the handicapped, for example, modified tables for wheelchair students.

N=5 Sharing experiences with other teachers was considered a resource need. In this instance other teachers became resource people. This category was separated from a previous category which included resource people, in order to emphasize the concern for using teachers as resource personnel.

N=5 More field trips and an opportunity to visit facilities that specialize in working with the handicapped was identified as an indirect resource need.

RESOURCES
TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

N=13 The most frequently requested resource need was in the audiovisual area.

Included here were: Audiovisual aids to accompany instructional programs, audiovisual consultants to work with the teachers, and simple and easy to understand filmstrips or captioned slides.

N=6 In this cluster the focus was on a need for resource materials on a simplified and expanded basis, and a need for individualized materials. Resource material for the blind and deaf students was also noted.

Each of the following statements were reported only once in the responses:

Need tables in drafting that can adjust for the handicapped individual, especially a handicapped in a wheelchair.

Need a resource instructor to work with the teacher.

Need more tours of work facilities.

A need for more community involvement such as affiliating with local churches, associations of local businessmen, to assist in placing these students into the work world.

A Summary Teacher Comment

"How can you adequately train a slow learner without repetition? This takes more supplies and materials. How can you buy supplies without additional finances?"

RESOURCE NEEDS: A COMPOSITE OF STATEMENTS FROM ALL SERVICE AREAS

An analysis of the responses to resource needs from all the service areas revealed two primary concerns - based on the frequency of the responses - audiovisual materials and print materials.

Audiovisual Materials

The most frequently reported resource need was for audiovisual materials. A variety of statements were represented here including the need for labs, workshops, audio tape, films, simulated projects with AV materials and, in general, more audiovisual materials which are colorful and interesting, and films that show some examples of problems faced and how to solve them.

In the area of audiovisuals there was a concern for materials geared to the student level and not to level of an average learner; a need for audiovisuals for non-readers; and requests from all areas for a listing of appropriate audiovisual resources for the specific service area.

Print Materials

This category reflected almost as many responses as the category for audiovisual materials.

The print materials category encompassed such resources as specially prepared curricula, funnybook type materials, large print text, high interest - low reading level material,

specially prepared pamphlets, individualized materials, and curricula which would give the teacher an idea as to how to teach students with special needs.

Where to get resource materials?

This Category reflected more of a process variable than a content variable, but it is directly related to both of the primary categories of Print and Audiovisual materials. Statements like: What is available? Where do you get it? And what does it cost? were typical of the responses. It should also be noted here that this category provides a direct crossover to the resource category in Training Needs.

Resource-individuals

This category provided a broad representation of resource-individuals including teacher aides, other experienced teachers and resource consultants.

Supplies

The need for additional supplies was reflected as a resource need. By supplies is specifically meant construction and production materials like wood, metal, fabric, fertilizer, nails and related.

Equipment

Special, adapted or modified equipment was identified as a resource need. The references here were not so much to

standard equipment as to the modification of table heights for wheelchair access, left-handed typing desks and the like.

Transportation for Field Trips

Field trips were identified as a resource that teachers would more like to use. The limiting factor here appeared to be the lack of transportation for these field trips.

RECOMMENDATIONS: RESOURCE NEEDS

A Strategy for Change ....

The use of financial resources earmarked for special needs for the development of special projects, curricula, and programs has in several states resulted in model programs of services to the disadvantaged and handicapped students.

Without the availability of additional resources, the instructor must frequently rely on approaches and methodology that is less than adequate. As one teacher said in the survey: "How can you adequately train a slow learner without repetition? This takes more supplies and materials. How can you buy supplies without additional finances?"

All too often we hear the statement: "Do the best you can with what you have." Repeated too frequently it becomes an excuse for not doing well.

If vocational instructors are to commit their times and energies to providing the necessary appropriate and adequate training for students with special needs, those essential resources to do the job must be available.

It is recommended that a proportion of those monies that are earmarked for special needs services be set aside: For special projects initiated by the school systems or individual instructors; for use in developing modifying or adapting curricular materials for special needs; for identification, location, and purchase of resources, both audiovisual

and print. As an extension of this last component it is recommended that monies be set aside to develop a material and information center for special needs instruction. In conjunction with the recommendations from the Training Needs analysis, workshops not only on the information and availability of resources should be conducted, but also workshops that would help the teachers integrate new and innovative materials and approaches into their traditional coursework. Several states have already implemented a resource center for special needs materials in vocational education.

With regard to information and availability of resource materials, a free loan system should be developed and implemented in conjunction with the statewide resource center.

An active outreach by both the state department staff and university programs in Alabama should be undertaken to solicit support through grant funding for the exploration and development of special projects. This activity can be conducted as part of the research studies or field initiated studies of BOAE or BEH.

The concept of an itinerant resource person should be explored. The primary skills of this individual should be in materials and information and not a reviewer of programs. Logistics would indicate that this itinerant resource person would also be part of the statewide resource center.

There is currently, as part of a federal program of regional centers across the country, a statewide network of centers on Instructional Material in Special Education. A review of the holdings of these centers reveals a paucity of materials that have applications at a secondary level. An initial effort in the materials direction would be to expand the scope of the resources of these centers to be more responsive to the needs of the secondary special educators and vocational educators who work in special needs.

The question regarding supplies, special equipment and transportation are resource concerns that must be handled on a local level.

Appendix A

Special Needs Assessment Survey

1. What problems have you encountered in working with either of the following special needs students;

   Handicapped:

   Disadvantaged:

2. What kind of training (through workshops or other kinds of educational programs) can you identify that would enable you to work better with disadvantaged or handicapped students?

3. What resource needs, other than financial, can you identify that would help you to work better with the special needs of students?

4. Please identify the most rewarding experience you have had in working with the disadvantaged or handicapped student?